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Haiti: Political tension is rising in Port-au-Prince following a series of military and civilian shake-ups.

At least 16 officers have been arrested recently, some of whom held important posts in the elite Presidential Guard. Many had ties with Duvalier's ambitious son-in-law, Colonel Max Dominique. [REDACTED]

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In addition to the military shake-ups, Duvalier reshuffled his cabinet last week, the first such move since November 1965, and replaced a number of representatives in outlying cities. Confusion and suspicion reportedly are mounting among Duvalier's closest associates.

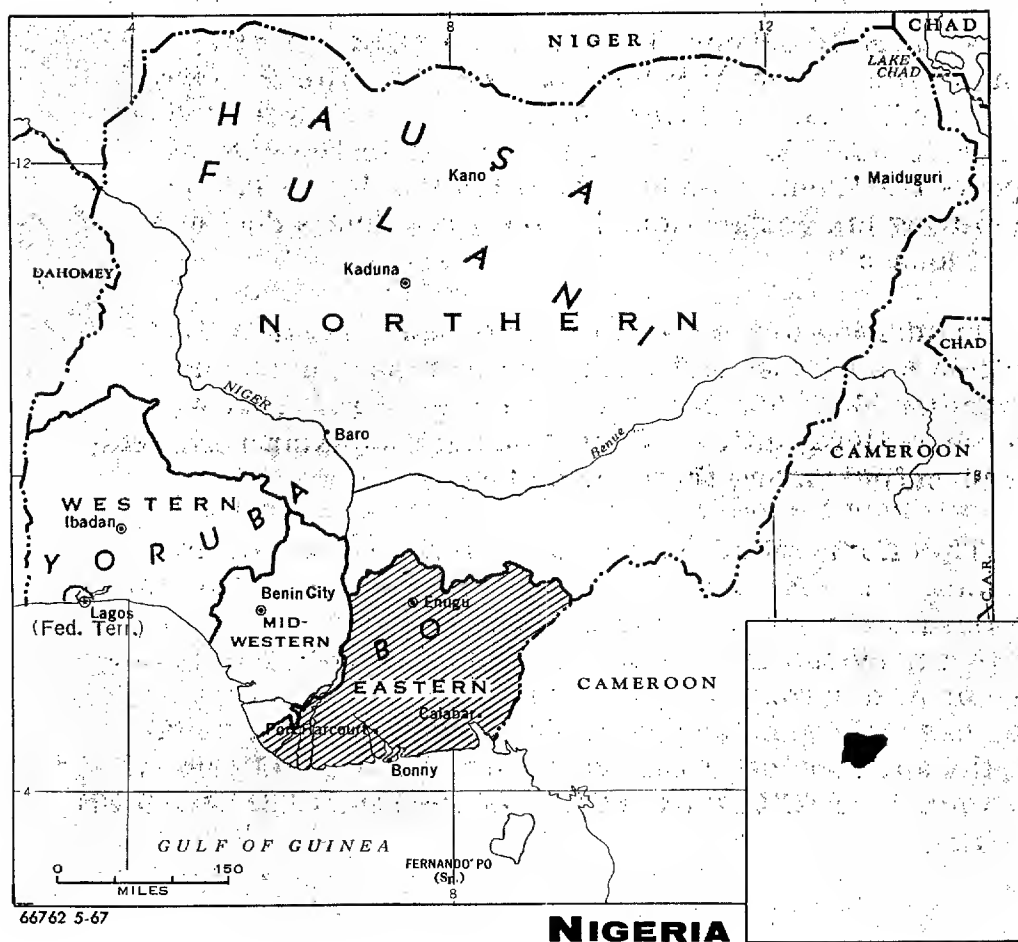
This flurry of activity coincides with a time of increasing financial hardship and international isolation for the Duvalier regime. Ambassador Timmons, while noting that previous predictions of Duvalier's political demise have proved erroneous, senses that the President's power base has undergone considerable erosion in the last six months and that the "final act in this drama could come at anytime." [REDACTED]

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*Nigeria: The secession of the Eastern Region as the "Republic of Biafra," proclaimed by Military Governor Ojukwu on 30 May, signals the beginning of the end of the Nigerian federation.

Lt. Col. Gowon, the federal government head, has alerted his 9,000-man army, largely Northerners. He also formally declared a blockade of the East. Gowon has only four small naval ships with which to enforce a blockade. The Eastern Region, with some 5,000 men under arms, has subsisted for several months without overland trade with the rest of Nigeria.

In view of his forces' logistical and other deficiencies, Gowon will probably hesitate to order an invasion of the East. He may, however, activate reported plans to support guerrilla activity in the Eastern minority tribal areas that he decreed into new states last week. The minority tribesmen long have resented domination by the majority Ibos, and some now may be willing, with considerable federal support, to mount a guerrilla warfare campaign aimed at breaking away from "Biafra." Ojukwu would probably have difficulty in containing this type of warfare, especially if it was well supported by the federal government.

Ojukwu faces the immediate problem of international recognition, although the long-term outlook seems bright. Other African countries faced with tribal problems are unlikely to condone quickly Nigeria's fragmentation. Moreover, reluctance by foreign shippers to run Gowon's blockade of Eastern ports could result in a slowdown in the East's foreign trade, perhaps involving oil exports.

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Meanwhile, the likelihood that violence may erupt in the Western Region appears to be growing. Yoruba tribesmen there are unhappy over Gowon's recent proclamation of an enlarged Lagos state that virtually shuts off their access to the sea. They are sure to be aroused further by the reported reversal on 30 May of the scheduled evacuation of hated Northern troops from Ibadan, the Western capital.

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NOTES

Belgium-Congo (Kinshasa): Antagonism between Union Miniere and the Congolese Government is building up again, and Brussels expects a new round of trouble. The Belgian ambassador in Kinshasa reports that President Mobutu is in a highly emotional state. He may act against Belgian mining, banking, sugar, or aviation interests to mark the anniversary of the Congo's independence on 30 June. [REDACTED]

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Venezuela: The Moscow-line Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) is showing signs of a new revolutionary spirit, [REDACTED] The PCV reportedly now wishes to end polemics and cooperate with all leftist groups, even the dissident Communist guerrillas under Douglas Bravo. The split between the rival groups is deep, however, and there have been no indications that either side would be amenable to cooperation except on its own terms. [REDACTED]

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